



ELECTION FOCUS 2008



September 5, 2008

No. 14

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The processes of the political national conventions have evolved over more than a century, but the purpose has remained the same -- to nominate presidential candidates and lay out goals and party priorities.

[Republicans Nominate John McCain for President](#) – 09/04/2008

At the Republican National Convention, delegates formally nominate Arizona Senator John McCain to the U.S. presidency. But for many, the evening's highlight is the speech by presumed vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin, an Alaska governor who will be only the second woman nominated to the U.S. vice ...

[Republican Party Leaders Call Sarah Palin a Reformer](#) – 09/04/2008

Journalists covering the Republican National Convention and people abroad watching the political events play out on television have asked two questions again and again this week: "Who is Sarah Palin and is she ready to be vice president?" The Alaska governor tries to answer those questions in a prime ...

[Will Globalization Move to Center Stage in American Election?](#) – 09/03/2008

Would a President Obama renegotiate a trade deal with Canada and Mexico? Would a President McCain stick to current U.S. trade policies? The real election debate about trade is not the one we have had so far...

[Obama Answers Science Questions Posed to Presidential Candidates](#) – 09/02/2008

If elected president of the United States in November, Barack Obama says he will double basic science research budgets over 10 years, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050, and reach out to international partners and the private sector to extend NASA's range of program ...

[Republicans Encouraged to Aid Those Affected by Hurricane Gustav](#) – 09/02/2008

With activities on the opening day of the Republican National Convention September 1 limited to official party business, presumed presidential nominee John McCain encouraged delegates to help those affected by Hurricane Gustav. ...

[Presidential Campaigns Try to Garner African-American Voters](#) – 09/02/2008

Both political parties are courting African-American voters in a 2008 presidential election that is predicted to be close, but the Democrats appear to enjoy an advantage. America.gov examines how the Republican and Democratic parties are appealing to America's black voters and the parties' prospects ...

[Barack Obama Accepts Presidential Nomination](#) – 08/29/2008

Barack Obama, on the 45th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech, formally accepts the Democratic Party's nomination for the presidency of the United States. "With profound gratitude and great humility, I accept your nomination for the presidency of the United ...

[American Indian Vote Will Be a Factor in Several Swing States](#) – 08/28/2008

American Indian voters, although a very small segment of the U.S. population, could be important in the 2008 presidential race because so many of them live in so-called swing states. Indians make up about 5 percent to 10 percent of the electorate in Arizona, North Dakota, Montana, Oklahoma, South Dakota ...

[Former President Helps Democratic Party Unite Behind Obama](#) – 08/28/2008

At the Democratic convention, former President Clinton tries to heal divides in the party from the hard-fought nomination contest. U.S. political parties have long histories of infighting, passionate arguments, bitter disagreements and, eventually, a coming together with a renewed energy and sense of ...

Daily updated information is available at a special **U.S. Elections** page at:
<http://uspolitics.america.gov/uspolitics/elections/>

Blogs at America.gov CAMPAIGN TRAIL TALK



<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/>

Provides running commentary and information on the 2008 elections in the United States. This blog keeps readers up to date on news, rumors and political chatter surrounding thousands of political races. Readers may ask questions about the electoral process, post their comments about the candidates, and generally guide the discussion.

Michelle Austein keeps you up to date on the candidates, issues and quirky happenings in the 2008 campaign, the third national election cycle she's covered. [Full Biography](#)

From the blog:

[Who do you think should be the next U.S. president?](#) — 04 September 2008
[Sarah Palin wows convention crowd](#) — 04 September 2008
[Former candidate Ron Paul draws a crowd in Minnesota](#) — 04 September 2008

[In Minnesota, even sharks get into the political spirit](#) - 03 September 2008
[Businesses woo news media](#) - 03 September 2008
[Welcome to "the land of Minnesota nice"](#) — 03 September 2008
[McCain campaign seeks support from Hispanic voters](#) - 02 September 2008

[Diplomats take a close look at the Democratic Convention](#) – 28 August 2008
[Bloggers work, play and relax in the "big tent"](#) - 28 August 2008
[Democrats wearing blue ... and green](#) - 27 August 2008
[Democratic delegates come from all over the world](#) - 27 August 2008

[Technology changing convention business](#) - 25 August 2008

POLLS

Obama Up Six Points In Gallup, ARG Polls, Five In Rasmussen Survey The [Gallup](#) daily presidential tracking poll of 2,767 registered voters taken August 31-September 2 shows Obama leading McCain 49%-43%, down from a 50%-42% lead the prior day. Gallup says this latest "rolling average probably does not reflect much impact of the delayed opening of the Republican National Convention now underway in St. Paul, Minn." The [Rasmussen Reports](#) automated daily presidential tracking poll for September 2 shows Obama leading McCain 48%-43%, and 50%-45% including leaners. A third poll from [American Research Group](#), released yesterday, surveyed 1,200 likely voters from August 30-September 1, and shows Obama leading McCain 49%-43%. [The Politico](#) notes, "While an improvement from 49 percent to 50 percent [in the Gallup poll] is statistically insignificant, the 50 percent mark holds significance for a party seeking to win its first majority since 1976, when Jimmy Carter won with 50.1 percent."

Obama Has Advantage In Three Battleground States A set of three [CNN](#) /Time/Opinion Research state polls out today shows Obama holding large leads in two battleground states (Iowa, Minnesota) and a tiny lead in a crucial one (Ohio). In Iowa, Obama leads McCain 55%-40%. In Minnesota, home of this week's GOP convention, Obama leads 53%-41%. In Ohio, the race is much closer, with Obama up 47%-45%. The surveys polled 828 registered voters in Iowa, 742 registered voters in Minnesota, and 685 registered voters from August 31 to September 2.

CAMPAIGN 2008



[Council on Foreign Relations – Issue Trackers](#)

Issue Trackers provide summaries of presidential candidates' positions on an array of foreign policy issues facing the United States.

[The Candidates on Defense Policy](#) - Council on Foreign Relations, September 2, 2008

The Iraq and Afghan wars aside, a series of complex defense policy decisions will face the next president—and, by association, those who seek the office.

[The Candidates on Homeland Security](#) - Council on Foreign Relations, September 2, 2008

Homeland security is likely to generate considerable discussion in the 2008 presidential race on topics such as the USA Patriot Act, border fences, and FEMA reforms after Hurricane Katrina.

[The Candidates on the War on Terror](#) - Council on Foreign Relations, September 2, 2008

Republican and Democratic candidates generally agree that a major campaign is needed to combat radical Muslim fundamentalism but differ on whether it amounts to a “war on terror.”

NATIONAL CONVENTIONS - WRAP UP



[CONVENTION MEMORIES](#). *By Larry J. Sabato* Center for Politics, September 4, 2008.

As we conclude 2008's two weeks of intense national political party conventions, Center for Politics Director Larry J. Sabato offers a retrospective on some of the 18 conventions he has attended since 1976.

[WHAT AN ELECTION!](#) *By Larry J. Sabato* Center for Politics, September 4, 2008.

Two tickets full of history, one headed by the first African-American in position to become president, the other with a woman situated to become the nation's first female vice president. Could it be that, in this increasingly diverse nation, we have seen the last of the all-white male party offerings that have characterized every presidential election in American history until 2008?

[AFTER BUSY WEEK, VIEWS OF BOTH CANDIDATES IMPROVE](#) - Pew Research Center, Sept. 3, 2008

As attention to the campaign increased substantially last week, the images of both Barack Obama and John McCain improved. Reviews of Obama's acceptance speech were overwhelmingly positive. Among those who could rate it, nearly half (48%) rated the speech excellent and another 36% rated it good. Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

[DENVER AND PALIN FUEL BIGGEST CAMPAIGN WEEK YET](#) - Pew Research Center, Sept. 3, 2008

Campaign coverage filled 69% of the overall newshole last week, by far the most media attention the 2008 election has received since PEJ began tracking it in January 2007. The Democratic convention dominated news early, but McCain's unexpected VP pick abruptly changed the subject. In just two days of tracking, Sarah Palin became the third biggest campaign story of the week.

[THE POST-CONVENTION BUMP](#) The Brookings Institution, September 2, 2008

Candidates typically gain popularity with voters immediately following their party conventions. But, as Darrell West explains, this “bump” in popularity is generally short-lived. This election cycle is no different and, he says, people won't really know where the candidates stand until a few weeks after the Republican convention.

[CELEBRITIES AT THE CONVENTIONS](#) - The Brookings Institution, August 27, 2008

Darrell West explains how both parties use celebrities at the conventions to add glitter and as network filler.

[FOREIGN POLICY AND POLITICAL NOMINATING CONVENTIONS](#). *By Joanna Klonsky*, Council on Foreign Relations, August 21, 2008.

U.S. political conventions offer the parties a place to unite around presidential candidates and a vision for foreign and domestic policy.

ELECTION CALENDAR

September 26, 2008 - First Presidential debate | **October 2, 2008** - Vice Presidential debate

October 10, 2008 - Second Presidential debate | **October 15, 2008** - Final Presidential debate

November 4, 2008 - Election Day

ARTICLE ALERT

POLITICAL CONVENTIONS. HAVE THEY OUTLIVED THEIR USEFULNESS? *Tom Price.*

CQ Researcher August 8, 2008, pp. 651-671.

The Democrats and Republicans share a fundamental goal for their upcoming national conventions: to produce scripted television shows that will boost their candidates' prospects in the general election without showcasing any intra-party squabbling. Under that scenario, convention delegates seem to have nothing to do but cheer Barack Obama and John McCain, whose nominations were virtually assured before the conventions began. If the important decisions are made before the conventions begin, ask some politicians, political scientists and critics in the media, why bother to hold them? Convention supporters argue that the gatherings are needed in case a nomination isn't settled beforehand. The conventions also make decisions about party rules that can affect which candidates get nominated. And conventions are the one time every four years when the parties become truly national organizations, with delegates and activists from around the country mingling face-to-face. To request a full text – please send an email: arc_brat@state.gov

BEHIND THE SCENES. *Richard Stengel.* **Time.** New York: Sep 8, 2008. Vol. 172, Iss. 10; pg. 2

In the cover story of our special Republican Convention issue, McCain's abiding concern with honor is the prism through which James Carney and Michael Grunwald look at the Republican presidential nominee.

[FULL TEXT](#)

MAKING THE MOST OF MOM. *Howard Fineman.* **Newsweek.** New York: Sep 1, 2008. Vol. 152, Iss. 9

Bionarrative has become integral to, and unavoidable at, conventions. In 1988, the GOP event featured a stirring video about the wartime life of Vice President George H.W. Bush. In 1992, Hollywood TV director Harry Thomason turned his sitcom skills to the times of producing "A Man From Hope." [FULL TEXT](#)

Plus - [Google News](#) as well as [Yahoo News](#) on **Elections** updated continuously

UPCOMING EVENTS



The 2008 Democratic and Republican party conventions represent the culmination of months of party primaries and caucuses, resulting in the selection of two official candidates for the U.S. presidency.

Conventions Wrap-up “The Youth Perspective”

Kim Ahern, Democratic Delegate, Rhode Island

Brian Graham, Republican Delegate, Florida

Date & Time: **September 8, 2008, 10:00 a.m. EDT** (1400 GMT)

To join the video Webcasts: <http://www.cpcwebcast.com/state/>

To join the Webchats: <http://departmentofstate.acrobat.com/conventions08>

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